

Battle of the Chesapeake program at Dover, Del.'s Old State House on Oct. 13, 2018

(DOVER, Del.—Oct. 2, 2018)—On Saturday, Oct. 13, 2018 at 1 p.m., [The Old State House](#), located at 25 The Green in Dover, Del., will offer a multi-media presentation by historic-site interpreter Tom Welch on the Battle of the Chesapeake, a decisive naval engagement of the American Revolutionary War in which a French fleet under Adm. de Grasse paved the way for the surrender of British Gen. Cornwallis at Yorktown and the ultimate American victory in its struggle for independence from Great Britain. Admission to the program is free and open to the public. For additional information, call 302-744-5054.



Painting depicting the Battle of the Chesapeake from the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, Norfolk, Va.

The Battle of the Chesapeake, also known as the [Battle of the](#)

[Capes](#), took place near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay on Sept. 5, 1781. During the mêlée, the French succeeded in preventing a British fleet from entering the bay to relieve Cornwallis' army that was [besieged at Yorktown, Va.](#) by a combined Franco-American army under generals Washington and Rochambeau. Deprived of reinforcements and much-needed supplies, Cornwallis surrendered to Washington on Oct. 19, 1781, effectively securing independence for the Thirteen Colonies.

Tom Welch has served as a historic-site interpreter for the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs since 2007 after a 27-year career as an administrator for Wesley College in Dover. An avid history aficionado, Welch was asked to portray Delaware patriot Allen McLane in a living-history program in 2008. Since then, he has been a dedicated scholar on McLane and has portrayed him in countless programs across the state. In addition to his presentation on the Battle of the Chesapeake, Welch has been instrumental in developing several programs on American history including [Hamilton](#), the [Allen McLane Symposium](#) and the [Old State House History Coffee-Hour Lecture Series](#).



Tom Welch

Completed in 1791, The Old State House is one of the earliest state-house buildings in the United States, serving as the

home of Delaware's legislature until 1933 when the General Assembly moved to larger quarters in Legislative Hall. The venerable structure now appears as it would have in the late 1700s during the United States' critical early years as a nation. It features a courtroom, governor's and county offices and chambers for the state's Senate and House of Representatives. The building is situated on Dover's historic Green, a public area designated by William Penn in 1683. The Green is a partner site of the [First State National Historical Park](#).



Old State House

The Old State House is administered by the [Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), an agency of the State of Delaware. The division enhances Delaware's quality of life by preserving the state's unique historical heritage, fostering community stability and economic vitality and providing educational programs and assistance to the general public on Delaware history. The division's diverse array of services includes operation of five museums which are [accredited by the American Alliance of Museums](#), administration of the State Historic Preservation Office, conservation of the state's archaeological and historic-objects collections, operation of a conference center and management of historic properties across the state. Primary funding for division programs and

services is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, a federal agency. However, the contents and opinions expressed in the division's programs and services do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior.



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